Demon Quest part one - The Relics of Time, by Paul Magrs

A BBC Audio Books Drama, released 2 September 2010

DOCTOR [narrating]: I'm an almost perpetual traveller. I wander through the vast star fields of the universe, I cross the bridges between dimensions, I traipse the tow paths of Time. The galaxies are mine to range across forever and a day. Sometime, though not often, I like to get away from it all, or at least try to. There is a house in deepest darkest Sussex, it's name, Nest Cottage. It has a housekeeper who tends the place when I'm travelling. Her name is Wibbsey. She can be a bit of a handful, the poor dear. Mrs Wibbsey doesn't really belong to the twenty century, but her duties are very light, and she's settled well into village life. Next Christmas I was returning to that quiet corner of the world after a year's absence. Snow clouds were gathering in the sky, and I was quite unaware of the heavy weather Mrs Wibbsey and I would soon have to face. Knowing her as I did by then, I'd have been foolish to expect a warm welcome.

DOCTOR: Ah ha ha. (tune of I'm ho-ome.)
WIBBSEY: Oh, so you're back again, are you?
DOCTOR: Oh. Just for a few days. I've promised the Tardis an overhaul, and also I thought I should see how you were getting on.
WIBBSEY: I see. Well, don't get under my feet. It's almost Christmas again. Are you staying for the festivities?
DOCTOR: Ah, remember last year?
WIBBSEY: Hardly likely to forget it, am I. I was hoping it'd be quieter this year, Doctor.
DOCTOR: We'll just have to see, won't we.
WIBBSEY: If you'll excuse me, I'm getting ready for the church bring and buy sale, and we're very busy. It should have been last week, but the pipes burst in the church hall, so now it's three days before Christmas and I'm run off my feet.
DOCTOR: Of course. Don't mind me.
WIBBSEY: I suppose you'll be wanting supper.
DOCTOR: I'd be a fool not to, glorious chef that you are.
WIBBSEY: Hmm.
DOCTOR: I'm pleased to see that you've settle in so well, away from your actual time and place.
WIBBSEY: Well, now that you mention it, when you've fixed up your time machine, do you, do you think you could take me back there? To Cromer 1932? Take me home.
DOCTOR: Oh. This may sound harsh, Mrs Wibbsey, but there's nothing there for you, back in the past. Your life is here now, at Nest Cottage.
WIBBSEY: Oh. I thought so. I see. Well, never mind. Welcome back, Doctor.

DOCTOR [narrating]: And so those few dark days before Christmas inched along. Snow fell, and Mrs Wibbsey came and went, banging and clattering about with boxloads of stuff from the attic and the cellar. I paid her little attention.

WIBBSEY: What about this? Will you be needing *this* any more?
DOCTOR: What? No. I'm busy. Go away.
WIBBSEY: Suit yourself.

DOCTOR [narrating]: Meanwhile I was wholly concerned with the various components from the Tardis console, which I had scattered about the parlour and the dining room. Truth be told, I had been a little er (clears throat) over-enthusiastic in some of my dismantling.

WIBBSEY: That looks like a proper dog's dinner.
DOCTOR: I know a dog who'd argue with that. Anyway, what would you know about relative dimensional engineering?
WIBBSEY: Nothing at all.

DOCTOR: No.
WIBBSEY: But I'd know better than to get marmalade in the workings.
DOCTOR: Hmm? Ah. Oh.

DOCTOR [narrating]: And with that, she was gone, down to the church hall in a flurry of biscuit tins and eiderdowns. I continued to tinker in the warm glow of the hearth fire, examining then reassembling each component of the Tardis console. It was around about midday when I started to look for the spatial geometer I'd earlier dismantled.

DOCTOR: That's funny. I'm sure I put the pieces down here somewhere.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I searched high and low, but it was only when my eyes fell upon a broken teacup nestling amongst my high tech paraphernalia that my suspicions began to grow.

DOCTOR: Oh no. She hasn't, has she? Mrs Wibbsey! Mrs Wibbsey!

DOCTOR [narrating]: My scarf and coat tails flew as I dashed across the village to the church hall. I was soon immersed in a sea of herringbone coats and knitted hats, and the musty smell of sandalwood.

WIBBSEY: Hello, Doctor. Come to find some new togs? There's a lovely cardigan here.

DOCTOR [narrating]: Mrs Wibbsey's stall was lavishly stocked, and mostly with belongings of mine. What was more, she had already made twenty three pounds fifty seven pence out of sundry artefacts.

WIBBSEY: I did explain to you that cottage of yours was far too cluttered.
DOCTOR: Everything comes in useful at some time or other, Mrs Wibbsey. Do you hear me?
WIBBSEY: I didn't think you'd miss any of this old rubbish.
DOCTOR: You must let me be the judge of that. You have no idea what kinds of things I'm storing at Nest Cottage. Things that should never see the light of day. I mean. What's this doing here?
WIBBSEY: New-fangled nonsense. I don't hold with gadgets.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, this is the cordless answerphone gadget I installed at Nest Cottage last Boxing Day. It's important, and very cleverly souped up for my own special purposes. Someone may try to get in touch with me.
WIBBSEY: Keep your voice down. Deirdre whatsit's earwigging.
DOCTOR: Never mind about Deirdre whatsit. I can't find a very important component of the Tardis, and I have reason to believe you scooped its component parts up and brought them here.
WOMAN: How much is this, please?
WIBBSEY: Two and six, dear.
WOMAN: Eh?
WIBBSEY: I mean er three pounds thirty seven.
WOMAN: Oh. I'll take it.
DOCTOR: That's my shaving mirror.
WIBBSEY: You never use it. Thank you, dear.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, have you seen four perspex cylinders of varying size and technical complexity?
WIBBSEY: Oh, that set of coloured tubes? I thought they were porch lights. Yes, this morning. A gentleman bought it. He said they'd make nice ornaments for his conservatory.
DOCTOR: Oh, give me patience.
WIBBSEY: Well, I say bought them. In actual fact, we did a part exchange.
DOCTOR: Was he someone from the village?
WIBBSEY: No, actually, he was a funny looking fellow. I'd never seen him before.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey
WIBBSEY: This bring and buy sale is in aid of the orphans, Doctor. I thought you could spare a bit of old rubbish for the sake of the children.
DOCTOR: This man, did he leave his name? Any details?
WIBBSEY: Why would he do that? Look, here are the things he gave me, in this bag. I haven't

put them out yet. According to him, they're valuable antiques.
DOCTOR: I can hardly bare to look.
WIBBSEY: I have to say, it doesn't seem like anything very valuable. Mostly papers. But he'd whistled off by the time I opened it.
DOCTOR: With a vital component from the Tardis under his arm?
WIBBSEY: Well, I'm sorry if I've done something wrong.
DOCTOR: Wrong? My dear Mrs Wibbsey, I think you may have done something absolutely catastrophic.
WIBBSEY: Oh dear.
DOCTOR: Now, gather up all this gubbins and help me carry it home.
WIBBSEY: Oh. Deirdre, could you mind my stall for a minute.

DOCTOR [narrating]: Back at the cottage, we examined the contents of the stranger's bag.

WIBBSEY: This is just rubbish, old bits of paper.
DOCTOR: Hmm, it's certainly a rum quartet of items. An old book of fairy tales, a poster of some kind, falling apart.
WIBBSEY: What about this? Looks like a page torn out of a history book.
DOCTOR: There's something attached to it. Ah, a piece of stone. How strange. What a very peculiar thing to do. An actual piece of stone taped to the page.
WIBBSEY: Oh, look, a mosaic.
DOCTOR: What?
WIBBSEY: The photograph at the bottom of the page. I used to love mosaics when I was a girl. There was one in Cromer church. Oh, it says here it was dug up from a Celtic settlement. Photograph shows a mosaic in the Roman style, first century AD, blah, blah.
DOCTOR: If I'm not mistaken, this piece of stone is a tile from that very mosaic in the picture. Bright blue. How strange. But have you noticed the oddest thing of all?
WIBBSEY: I couldn't very well have missed it, could I? The mosaic is a picture of you.
DOCTOR: Thought I'd mention it in passing.
WIBBSEY: Well, what's that all about? Have you been back there, meddling around?
DOCTOR: In the first century AD? Not recently. Oh dear, it does look a lot like me, doesn't it.
WIBBSEY: Look at this fourth item. Seems to be the cover of a small pamphlet with some cartoon on the front. It's been ripped off.
DOCTOR: It's not the only one. But there's more to this than simple daylight robbery. At first glance, I'd say each of these items has been doctored to feature my image. Someone has gone to a lot of trouble. Are you quite sure there were only these four things in the bag, Mrs Wibbsey?
WIBBSEY: Yes. Yes, quite sure. I'm so sorry, Doctor. I've given away your spatial whatsit for a bag of practical jokes.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I didn't say anything more just then to the disconsolate Mrs Wibbsey, but these simple objects had aroused my curiosity. While she returned to the jumble sale, I nipped out to the Tardis, which was waiting for me in the back garden. I took with me all of the components of the console plus the bag of papery artefacts. I sat up very late in the Tardis and chose one of the objects from the bag, the page from the history book with the picture of that curious mosaic. I examined the blue tile and let the Tardis's navigational computer mull that one over. According to the photographs accompanying the text, the mosaic had been discovered on a hill in West Sussex during the summer of 1964. There was something of a hoo-ha at the time because it wasn't thought that the Celts had such skills with mosaics. It seemed to have been assembled in the Roman style, around the time of the second Roman invasion of Britain. Curiously, the piece didn't mention the rather handsome subject depicted in his natty woollen scarf. It was quite a flattering likeness, you know. I don't usually take a very good mosaic, but on this occasion the artist had done a very good job. However, one morsel of information the writer did impart sent an enormous shiver down my spine. The settlement in which the mosaic was found showed other evidence of sacrifices being made to a powerful goddess, whose name was Wibbsentia. I thought about all of this for much of the night. These objects had been passed into the hands of my housekeeper. Clearly I was supposed to take note of them. Could they possibly be an archaic paper trail leading back into the past, hmm? The next morning found Mrs Wibbsey struggling to open the back door of the cottage, snow having fallen heavily in the night. She discovered me sitting at the picnic table, so deep in

thought that a layer of flakes had settled on my hat and scarf.

WIBBSEY: What on Earth are you doing, man? You'll catch your death out here.
DOCTOR: You and I are going on a journey, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: I'm not going anywhere except the shops, thank you very much.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, without the fragments of the component you bartered away at jumble sale, the Tardis's movements, and therefore mine, are limited. We can move freely in Time, but barely at all in Space. You have effectively grounded me on Earth! Now, at the very least, I think you should do as you're told. Don't you?
WIBBSEY: But what do you want with me? What can I do?
DOCTOR: This page from the history book. Please read what it says about where the mosaic was found.
WIBBSEY: I haven't got time for a history lesson, Doctor.
DOCTOR: Look here. A goddess called Wibbsentia.
WIBBSEY: Oh!
DOCTOR: Yes, Wibbsentia. It seems you're as much implicated in this anachronism as I am. Now quickly, into the Tardis.
WIBBSEY: You're not getting me inside that thing again.
DOCTOR: Do you realise how few people are offered the chance to travel in the Tardis with me? Now in, Wibbsentia.

DOCTOR [narrating]: Once inside, I applied myself to setting coordinates on the reassembled console. The mosaic tile had been very useful to the Tardis, giving her something palpable to forge a link with across the centuries. She could home in on its time-traces.

WIBBSEY: The night you first brought me here from the past, I think I pretended this Tardis of yours was just part of a dream.
DOCTOR: The interesting thing about that mosaic is that I haven't been in that era yet. Not in this body.
WIBBSEY: Not in this body? Oh, you do say the most peculiar things.
DOCTOR: Clearly, someone wants me, and you too, to visit now. This is nothing more than a clever invitation, a summons, and hopefully a clue to the whereabouts of that vital component.
(The Tardis dematerialises.)
WIBBSEY: Hey! We can't go now, I've left the back door open. The fire's on, there's bread baking in the oven.
DOCTOR: Too late for that, my Wibbsentia. Nest Cottage will have to look after itself. Now, find something to hold onto. Without the spatial geometer, this could be a rough journey.

(The Tardis materialises and the door creaks open.)
DOCTOR: Ah, here we are. Come on out, Mrs Wibbsey. Welcome to history. Look, we're in the exact same spot nearly two thousand years earlier. Just taste that air.
WIBBSEY: Ooo, it's freezing.
DOCTOR: Hmm. No wonder the Romans invented the duffel coat while they were here.
WIBBSEY: Deirdre had one on her stall. Wish I'd bought it now.
DOCTOR: There's one in the Tardis locker. Go and put it on. We've a long journey ahead.
WIBBSEY: Where are we going?
DOCTOR: To find the settlement on the hill, where that mosaic was created. And, if we're lucky, to find the artist who created it, eh?

DOCTOR [narrating]: Soon we were off, tramping into the unspoiled countryside.
(Creak of deep snow underfoot. Occasional cawing of corvids.)
WIBBSEY: How do you know we're in the right year?
DOCTOR: The Tardis has a very delicate nose for things like that, if you give her enough to go on.
WIBBSEY: All right then, that got us this far, but do you propose to find the specific village?
DOCTOR: The page from the history book give the location where the Celtic settlement was dug up. I've correlated that with my pocket Ordnance Survey map of Roman Britain, and here in my hand is a simple compass. Now, first of all we have to find Stane Street, just off Baker Street.
WIBBSEY: You're joking, of course.

DOCTOR: You'll see. That is, if it's been built yet.

DOCTOR [narrating]: We trekked through frosty fields and creaking woods. We saw hardly any signs of human life, but deer and birds and rabbits roamed all over the place. And as we sat down on a felled log with a meagre lunch of berries and water from a stream, Mrs Wibbsey berated me for not allowing her to bring proper supplies.

WIBBSEY: We're not equipped for this. We're going to be found dead in the middle of nowhere.
DOCTOR: Hardly, Mrs Wibbsey. I do this sort of thing all the time. Jelly baby? Take two, they're very nourishing.
WIBBSEY: No thanks.
DOCTOR: Oh.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I had to hand it to the woman. Oh, she had some stamina. That first day we walked for miles before we came to anything that resembled a road or a track.

DOCTOR: According to the map, it shouldn't be too far away now. We should be thankful the mosaic wasn't dug up in Northumberland.
WIBBSEY: It'd be easy just to disappear, wouldn't it, to get lost here in this more simple time, and never go back home.
DOCTOR: There's no such thing as a simpler time. Each age has its own complications.
WIBBSEY: There'd be none of this terrorism they all talk about in the village. No money worries, no global economy or mugging or weapons of mass destruction.
DOCTOR: Oh, you've been learning a lot, haven't you?
WIBBSEY: Shh. Listen.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I had been so caught up in her concerns that I failed to hear what she had heard. The stirring of branches, the crumping of feet through the frozen grass.

DOCTOR: Oh! Get off!
WIBBSEY: Don't hurt him. What are you doing? He's never done anything to you. Who are you people?
MAN: You can't stay out here. Night's approaching. You must come with us.
WIBBSEY: You, you speak English.
DOCTOR: Ow! Who hit me? If either of us was going to argue it would have been her. What's going on?
WOMAN: You will come. We have food and a place for you to sleep.
WIBBSEY: Who are they, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I don't know.
WOMAN: Come, we must return to the encampment. The dark is rising.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I believe they thought we were Romans, eccentrics who had lost our way and wandered into their realm. I was fascinated by our would-be hosts who appeared to belong to a Celtic tribe. They were covered in a rough kind of make-up as if for disguise. Their clothing was also rough. In fact, they were more barbaric than I would have expected for the period. But after all, this was the deep countryside.

DOCTOR: I think I read about you lot in Tacitus, though I did wonder how much to believe.
WIBBSEY: They're quite polite though, aren't they. Apart from hitting you on the head.
DOCTOR: Don't be complacent, Mrs Wibbsey. They're probably intending to eat us or something. How do you feel about being put into a stew?
WIBBSEY: I've been in one since the first day I met you.

DOCTOR [narrating]: And just as the darkness descended completely, we arrived at the tribe's small encampment. It was a shabby, primitive place. Straw-thatched roofs on houses of wattle and daub, hens scratching about, and everything centring about the largest structure, a kind of village hall, where all the people crowded for warmth and sustenance.

WIBBSEY: You do bring me to the nicest places, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Yes, we seem to have been derailed a bit, don't we.

DOCTOR [narrating]: They were talking about us, these tribal folk, muttering darkly and glancing our way. Word of our advent spread like wild fire, and soon we were surrounded ragamuffin children and gnarled ancients, supposedly wise ones. Also, the younger, burlier members of the tribe. All of them wanted to see the strangers, the aliens.

MAN: Are you Roman? Are you the ones from overseas? They say they're coming again and again in waves, like they did almost a century ago, led by the one they called Julius Caesar.
DOCTOR: No, no, we're nothing to do with that lot. We're neighbours of yours, or will be in two thousand years time. You've nothing to fear from us.

DOCTOR [narrating]: As night set in they made us welcome at their meagre feast. Hanks of roasted boar flesh and some kind of home-brewed ale which Mrs Wibbsey wouldn't touch.

WIBBSEY: There are things floating in it.
DOCTOR: Shh, shh, shh. It's important for us to accept their hospitality graciously, Mrs Wibbsey. These people are struggling to survive. They need every drop of sustenance they can get. It's very kind of them to take us in.
WIBBSEY: It's not very clean, history, is it.
DOCTOR: Oh, you should see the future. I'm often getting my hands dirty, I'm afraid.
WOMAN: The elders have been conferring. They are intrigued by you. Some think they recognise your type, your features and bearing, your strange apparel.
DOCTOR: Oh, really? Who do they think I am?
WOMAN: They're hoping you hail from the west, from the lost tribes, the Druids, the magicians.
DOCTOR: Oh, that's very flattering, but I'm afraid magic's not my thing. Prognostication, fancy bangs and flashes calling up strange spirits? I'm hopeless at all that sort of thing.
WIBBSEY: I'm not so sure.
DOCTOR: (sotto) Wibbsey, don't interfere.
WIBBSEY: (sotto) If you tell them you're a Druid or whatever they want, they might help us on our way.
DOCTOR: Tell me, why do they hope we're Druids?
WOMAN: Because that means you'll have special powers. That's the only reason they'd have to keep you alive.
DOCTOR: I see. Well, Mrs Wibbsey here is a marvel with the entrails of goats, especially billy goats, ain't you, Wibbs.
WIBBSEY: What?
DOCTOR: (sotto) Your giblet gravy last Christmas.
WOMAN: Will you help us with your magic?
DOCTOR: Humour her, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: I, I'll do what I can. Giblets indeed.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I admired Mrs Wibbsey for the way she took everything in her stride, even being led ceremonially into the centre of the village hall and introduced to the whole community as a powerful High Priestess of the Old Religion. It didn't phase her. We both realised that the prophecies of the history books were quickly coming to life. And so when the villagers asked her name, she merely followed its suggestion. She told them she had come among them to portend the future, and their chances of survival this winter.

MAN: Great Wibbsentia, we are honoured that you have favoured our small tribe with your presence. We will reward you greatly for your efforts this night.
WIBBSEY: I ask for little. Just that the Doctor and I be pointed in the right direction and allowed to go on our way.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I watched with great interest, wincing a little as they slashed a goat's throat right in front of Mrs Wibbsey, and let the fresh blood run into bronze goblets. Wibbsey went quite green as they slit open its belly and dragged out all of its insides under her beaky nose. It might have been nausea, or the billowing smoky incense, or, on the other hand, she might actually have gone into a trance. Either way, her eyelids fluttered and she swayed on the spot. Oh, bravo, Mrs Wibbsey, I thought. She looked just like a genuine Druidic priestess in the

midst of a ritual.

MAN: What do you scry in the goat's liver and lights? Tell us their sacred aspects, you wondrous entrail-gazer.
WIBBSEY: I see, I see another tribe, very like you, not far from here, yet they hate you and fear you. They have raided this village again and again, killing and stealing. They are stronger than you, cleverer.
MAN: Yes, yes, this is true.
DOCTOR: Oh, well guessed, Wibbsey. Splendid.
WIBBSEY: They take the best of the crops and livestock in this locality. You will never defeat them. They have the upper hand. This is because they have help. Someone, a great and powerful man, has been helping them in recent months.
MAN: Yes, we believe so. We have sent spies. Only one returned from their encampment on the hill. Only one living witness returned to tell us.
WIBBSEY: I can see it all. They have a great wizard whom they revere. A wizard from abroad, who has with him a pet monster who guards their village. A huge beast from another world. And the wizard is all-powerful. He will see to it that you, the rivals of his tribe, are utterly destroyed.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I thought Mrs Wibbsey was doing an incredible turn, very authentic in the soothsayer stakes, but then, with this business about wizards and monsters, I wondered if she wasn't going too far. The people around me were gasping in shock and quivering in their fur-lined boots. And as for all that stuff about destruction.

WOMAN: She has spoken. Wibbsentia has shown us that we must strike out against these enemies of ours. She has shown us the perils we face.
WIBBSEY: Is, is that enough? Can I sit down now? I've come over a bit giddy.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, come over here and lie down. (sotto) That was quite remarkable. Perhaps there's something in this scrying business after all.
WOMAN: We must not despair. Wibbsentia has shown us only one possible outcome. We will only be destroyed if we give in to the tribe on the hill and their precious wizard. But now we have our own secrets. Today we have gained wizards of our own.

DOCTOR [narrating]: They went burbling on in this manner, but my attention was on poor woozy Wibbsey.

WIBBSEY: What did I say? It all came pouring out like gibberish. Did I give a good impression?
DOCTOR: A little too good. You've got them wanting to declare war on the next tribe.
WIBBSEY: Oh, no. I got the verse reading prize at school when I was a girl. I didn't go all Henry the Fifth, did I?
DOCTOR: Not quite, but you said some very strange things. Things which, if they are true, you couldn't possibly have known.
WIBBSEY: What?

DOCTOR [narrating]: There wasn't time to go into it then, but I was very intrigued by Mrs Wibbsey's curious sensitivities. We were interrupted, rudely, by a delegation from our hosts. They had rapidly made up their minds to offer us a bargain. Our lives and freedom to go on with our quest as we wished, in return for helping them. Helping them by visiting this other encampment on the hill and executing the wizard and his monster.

MAN: Well, Doctor, great Wibbsentia, what do you say?
DOCTOR: Murder and execution aren't really my style.
MAN: You will destroy them by fair means or foul, or magic if need be. If not, we will sacrifice you both. The sacrifice of a Priestess and a Druid is very potent.
DOCTOR: At lease you're in a win win situation.
MAN: It has been an auspicious day.
DOCTOR: Very interesting about the word auspicious. It refers to bird watching, you know, Wibbsey. Ancient peoples thought they could tell the future by watching
WOMAN: One of our elders observed the starlings this morning. He knew that today would bring treasures for us, and here you are.

DOCTOR: I see.
WIBBSEY: We don't really have a choice, do we. We've got to do what they want, and become assassins.

DOCTOR [narrating]: They allowed us to rest that night, to sleep and marshal our resources, but we had a miserable time of it, lying on that hard-packed earth under heaps of rank and uncured skins. The dark air was murmurous, the whole tribe seemed to snore. I sat up late thinking about that mosaic, weighing up the small blue tile in the palm of my hand.

WIBBSEY: I can't sleep like this. I keep thinking about the dangers we have to face. Can't we just nip away, back to the Tardis?
DOCTOR: We're inside the time line now, Mrs Wibbsey. We are part of the unfolding events and we must stay to see it through. I have an appointment with an unfinished work of art, a masterpiece from the ancient world.
WIBBSEY: Even so, why can't we just nip out while this lot are asleep and go about our own business.
DOCTOR: Don't underestimate our hosts. Step out of line and you'll feel a spear in your back. It wouldn't be long before they caught up with us. We must do their bidding if we want to get free.
WIBBSEY: I feel like we'll never get back to normality again.
DOCTOR: But this *is* normality, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIBBSEY: I knew you'd say that.

(Cockerel crows.)
DOCTOR [narrating]: Dawn broke, and the shadows shifted, and someone was up tending the great hearth in the centre of the village hall. I had been up all night, mulling things over, thinking about wizards and monsters and Celtic tribes and jumble sales and bundles of curious documents.

WOMAN: Our elders believe it's best if you set off straight after breakfast. The tribes forage in the daytime and their defences are at their lowest.
DOCTOR: Your elders do all the deciding around here, don't they. Haven't you heard of the youth vote?
WOMAN: When you have killed the wizard, we will seize our chance. Our warriors will attack their encampment.
DOCTOR: I don't like the sound of that.
WOMAN: You will do as the elders have commanded.

DOCTOR [narrating]: In the morning light, the tribespeople looked even more fearsome. It was a foetid old place, and we were relieved to be out in the open and the cold morning air.

WIBBSEY: Are they still watching us?
DOCTOR: Keep walking quickly, Mrs Wibbsey. Just turn and give a hearty wave. Arrivederci!
WIBBSEY: Why didn't they send someone with us? Why do they trust us not to run away?
DOCTOR: I think they fear what this other tribe has got. None of them will go anywhere near.
WIBBSEY: Because they've got a wizard?
DOCTOR: Magic can be a powerful thing to those who believe in it. Come on, let's pick up our pace a bit.

DOCTOR [narrating]: It took us a little while to negotiate the untamed stretch of countryside that separated the two antagonistic tribes. We were going through a dense thicket of trees when we made a gruesome discovery in the undergrowth.

WIBBSEY: I always imagined the Celts as more civilised, somehow. Not squabbling like this between little gangs.
DOCTOR: We've arrived at a time of great uncertainty. With the Romans about to land in force, almost a hundred years after Julius Caesar's first visit, things are about to become interesting. Some of the British tribes will work with the Romans and be glad of their presence, others will resist with every iota of their strength. For a few years, everything gets rather messy.
WIBBSEY: I can't abide mess.

DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, don't look down.
WIBBSEY: What is it?
DOCTOR: I said don't look.
WIBBSEY: Oh!
DOCTOR: Corpses.
WIBBSEY: They've just been left out here to rot.
DOCTOR: I thought the Celtic tribes cremated their dead. They certainly didn't just throw them down the hill like this.
WIBBSEY: They look as if they've been here for years. They're all leathery.
DOCTOR: Dessicated. Sucked dry. Hmm, a corpse-strewn copse. These bodies haven't been here for years, Mrs Wibbsey. Look at their clothes. They're dirty, but not ancient.
WIBBSEY: Then what could have happened to these poor people? Oh, there's more over there! There must be nearly twenty of them.
DOCTOR: Their dress is too sophisticated for the place we've left. They must come from our destination. Someone is killing them and hiding their remains.
WIBBSEY: Who or what kills people like this?
DOCTOR: Nothing in this age. I don't like this, Mrs Wibbsey. I don't like this at all. Come on.

DOCTOR [narrating]: It was easy to see where we needed to head for. Over the tallest hill, plumes of ash grey smoke hung in the wintry sky. This encampment looked more sophisticated than the one we had left.

WIBBSEY: They're obviously richer and more organised than our poor lot. Look at all this. It's a big city in comparison. It's like Norwich.

DOCTOR [narrating]: We considered the best way to approach this startling conurbation. We saw women, children and elderly people, livestock ambled freely about the place, but still we approached with great caution.

WIBBSEY: A few dead bodies down the hill is the least of their worries, I suppose. You do realise this place will be under attack today, and we'll be the cause of it?
DOCTOR: (loudly) Good morning!
WIBBSEY: Oh, here we go.
DOCTOR: Hello, my dear. I wonder would you be so good as to take us to your wizard. We've heard such wonderful things about him.
WIBBSEY: Why do you always have to show off?

DOCTOR [narrating]: The young woman whom I'd asked seemed rather surprised by our appearance. She started screaming, and gathering others about her, and all at once the little boulevard we'd strayed into was awash with unwashed figures. They shouted and prodded and poked at us. Dogs barked, babies cried. I tried to smile and look harmless, but to no avail. I was getting the famous Wibbsey stare from my housekeeper too. And then suddenly a new figure appeared in their midst.

WIZARD: Welcome, both of you.
DOCTOR: I mean, if people don't understand simple good manners.
WIBBSEY: Doctor, that old chap, he's talking to you.
DOCTOR: What? Oh, hello. I'm the Doctor, and this is my curmudgeonly housekeeper, Mrs Wibbsey.
WIZARD: Have you come far?
DOCTOR: Well, you see, your neighbours across the far side of the plain, they sent us on a kind of mission.
WIZARD: Then you've been very brave to come here.
DOCTOR: It's quite amusing. We were sent here to assassinate or otherwise put paid to this wizard fellow they've got holed up here. You don't happen to know him, do you?
WIZARD: Wizard, you say, hmm?
WIBBSEY: Doctor, do you think that maybe this chap
DOCTOR: I know, I know there's no such thing as wizards, and I dare say this fellow is just some opportunist taking advantage of a primitive people, perhaps impressing them with a spot of superior knowledge to gain precedence in their little society, wouldn't you say, hmm?

WIZARD: Oh, er, probably. Undoubtedly, sir.
WIBBSEY: Do you think you could make the rest of your tribe back off? They're being rather threatening.
DOCTOR: Yes, We've been threatened by all sorts since we arrived in this place. No one seems to like us.
WIZARD: (showing a slight stammer) I'm a f-f-foreigner here myself. It takes a little time to settle in amongst these island people.
DOCTOR: How interesting. I can see you're different from the others.
WIBBSEY: I was trying to point that out, Doctor. I think this man might be their
DOCTOR: You're their wizard, aren't you. Of course.
WIZARD: Wizard? How ridiculous. I hate to be accused of b-b-b-building up my own part. But come along, come along. My own small dwelling isn't far. You can sit down and tell me all about this amusing mission of yours.
DOCTOR: Lead on, Mac, oh no, that's not yet. What's that noise, by the way, Mister, Mister.
WIZARD: Oh, that's my elephant. Just my elephant. I stole her, you know, when I absconded. Now come along, the two of you, into the warmth.

DOCTOR [narrating]: It turned out he really did have an elephant. A tired looking, shivery creature tethered to a tree near his tent.

(Elephant trumpets.)
DOCTOR: Hello, old cock. Ooo, you're a long way from home. You know, Mrs Wibbsey, the Romans used elephants to attack cities when they were invading. They brought them in ships to scare the natives.
WIBBSEY: Oh, this one's days of scaring people are long over.
WIZARD: Oh, she could still give you a run for your money. She's been a good companion to me.
DOCTOR: Perhaps I'll try it myself one day.
WIBBSEY: So this is your monster, is it? The beast that the other tribe is so scared of.
DOCTOR: You haven't been letting her roam the countryside, scaring the Celts to death, have you?
WIZARD: She's stayed by my side for months.
DOCTOR: It's just that we found some very strange remains hidden in the grass at the bottom of the hill.
WIBBSEY: Oh, horrible.
DOCTOR: Human remains.
WIZARD: How distressing for you. This is a very dangerous time, you know. One can easily come a cropper in this barbarian land
DOCTOR: Yes, I see.
WIZARD: Their families were probably too busy to bury them. A savage time, this is. People can't afford the niceties. Having said that, do come indoors and have a drink.

DOCTOR [narrating]: We followed the man into what appeared to be just another rough built dwelling made of branches and skins, but inside we discovered what seemed like a palace in comparison. There were carpets and wall-hangings, and a few nick-nacks scattered about the place, all plainly Roman in origin.

WIZARD: My humble abode.
DOCTOR: How charming.
WIZARD: Oh, don't mind Metafix over there. He's just finishing up for the day. He's doing my f-f-f-f-f-floor for me.
WIBBSEY: Oh, I say. Doctor.
DOCTOR: Ah, a mosaic.
WIZARD: Yes. Rather fine, isn't it? He's a very skilled worker, this boy. He's picked up the rudiments of this kind of work very quickly. I'll make a Roman craftsman of him yet.

DOCTOR [narrating]: And so it seemed that we were in the right place after all. The artist behind our history was in the process of putting together a portrait of our new host, this apparent wizard.

WIZARD: It's going to be rather fine, don't you think? I do like a nice mosaic.
DOCTOR: Amazing. It's going to be you, isn't it?
WIZARD: Quite.
DOCTOR: Well, I'm sure it'll be an excellent resemblance when he gets to your actual face.
WIZARD: You must have some of this. It's a kind of mulled wine.
WIBBSEY: Doctor, we have to tell him. Listen, whoever you are, your people here are in terrible danger.
WIZARD: These are dangerous times.
WIBBSEY: The other tribe, the ones who grabbed us, they're going to attack your lot this afternoon, while the hunters are away foraging and the place is defenceless.
WIZARD: Ah, but these people have their wizard. Me. Everyone in these parts fears the wizard, and his elephant.
WIBBSEY: But we're meant to assassinate you. That's what we're here to do.
WIZARD: Is it? Oh dear. Are you sure you're meant to have killed me?
WIBBSEY: Well, of course, we're not actually going to do it.
WIZARD: I'm relieved to hear it, Mrs Wibbsey. I've seen off a fair few assassination attempts, you know. My family were famous for it. I've ducked more slings and arrows than you've cooked hot dinners.
DOCTOR: Still, it's a quandary, isn't it. The sundial is, well, not ticking exactly. Those warriors we met clearly intend to attack the camp. Your little idyll is under threat.
WIZARD: Yes, my idyll, that's what it is. This is what I dreamed of for so many years. S-s-s-s-slipping away quietly into retirement and obscurity.
DOCTOR: Still rather stressful, though.
WIZARD: Why do you say that?
DOCTOR: Your stammer's returned.
WIZARD: You know me?
DOCTOR: By reputation, by the written records, and by the currency of your Empire. Mrs Wibbsey, let me introduce to you the Emperor Claudius, ruler of the known world, ruler of even this strange little backwater, Britain.
WIBBSEY: Claudius? The Claudius?
DOCTOR: Yes, indeed. I must say I'm surprised to find you here, your Majesty, or Lord God, or your Imperial whatever it is you like to be called. If my knowledge of these times is correct, you shouldn't be here at all. There's nothing in the history books about your hiding away in a village for months on end.
WIZARD: I can see there's no use in protesting, Doctor er, whoever you are. The game's up. You've found me out. I don't know, er, what these books are you speak of, but the fact is, I've been a little naughty. It was back in the spring, you see. I was heading north with my retinue. We were galloping along on the new road, an easy fifty miles a day. But then I pulled a f-f-f-f-fast one, didn't I. The Claudians have always been very nimble thinkers, very tricky souls. I gave the others the slip, even with an elephant in tow, my loyal c-c-c-c-companion. I managed to get away. They're quite lost without me, but what do I care? I just fancied a quiet life.
WIBBSEY: But surely you can't just stop being Emperor?
WIZARD: Why not? It's a ghastly job. I'm sick of that treacherous lot. I'm quite happy here, thank you. The Britons will look after me, so long as they think I'm a wizard and can be of some use. But I've had quite enough of the back-stabbing nastiness of Rome.
WIBBSEY: But history doesn't go like that. That isn't how it happens.
DOCTOR: You tell him, Mrs Wibbsey. You're doing very well.
WIBBSEY: What? Oh, I can't believe all this is happening.
DOCTOR: I'm afraid she's right, Claudius. You were only here in Britain for sixteen days, you know. You've already outstayed yourself. And once you've gone home, your invaders get on with it on your behalf. Your people are here for hundreds of years, building roads, inventing central heating, generally modernising the old place.
WIZARD: Surely these are just prophecies. They can be avoided, with c-c-c-care.
DOCTOR: No. History is history, and you're standing in the way.
WIZARD: Oh, let us not worry ourselves about all that now. I want to show you the room next door.
DOCTOR: Claudius, you and your elephant can't just sit with your heads in the mud.
WIZARD: Why not?
DOCTOR: Well, for one thing, because your nearest neighbours are about to destroy this village, and they will too. They are desperate, starving. This tribe of yours, they're softer, better

fed. They won't stand a chance.
WIZARD: I've become rather fond of them, you know. I've taught them better ways to cultivate the rough soil, given them more efficient tools.
DOCTOR: You mustn't interfere. You should let these people get on with their lives, and return to your own lot.
WIZARD: Who are you to tell me what to do?
DOCTOR: Now don't get all imperious.
WIZARD: Just because you claim to have seen this future world in which Rome invades the British Isles doesn't mean I can't do exactly as I please.
WIBBSEY: But it's one of the basic facts about this country. It happened. If you prevent it, I don't know what will happen.
DOCTOR: If Claudius here treats Britain as his retirement home, everything will change. Everything.
WIBBSEY: Go on, Doctor. Prove to him we've come from the future.

DOCTOR [narrating]: In exasperation I dug through my capacious coat pockets for something to do the trick. However, my sonic screwdriver failed to impress the haughty Emperor with its polite whirr. Neither did he take much interest in a timetable for the Martian shuttle bus, or a Cornish pasty with a sell by date of March the twelfth 1980. My last ditch attempt to impress him centred around the answerphone gadget from Nest Cottage, the one I'd rescued from the jumble sale table. It was right at the bottom of my deep overcoat pockets.

WIZARD: So what does this one do?
DOCTOR: You know all about sibyls and portents and prognostications, don't you? Well, this incredible device talks with the voice of the future.
WIZARD: Well, well, well. And it even lights up.
DOCTOR: It brings messages from the heavens, that is, if there's anything on it.
(There is a message after the beep.)
YATES [OC]: Hello there, Mrs Wibbsey. And Doctor, if you're there too. Just a quick message to say I'm at a loose end this Christmas and so I thought I'd drop in and see you. As a matter of fact, I rather hoped you'd be expecting me. Oh, and I'll be bringing Captain with me too. (barking) Captain, down, Captain. All being well, I'll be arriving by the two thirty train on the twenty third of December. Who'd have thought it was a year since
(Beep!)
DOCTOR: I think the tape ran out. He always did talk too much.
WIBBSEY: So that's one more to cook for.
WIZARD: Well, well. It is, as you say, quite m-miraculous. (sotto) No doubt it'll all be on microchip one day.
DOCTOR: What did you say?
WIZARD: Oh, I said er that voice, it's like the voice of a s-s-sibyl.
DOCTOR: I'll remember to tell him.
WIBBSEY: Do you believe us now, that we come from the future.
WIZARD: It seems I must believe you, though of course it is incredible. But still, now that we have that cleared up, let me show you around my palace. I'll be back in a jiffy.

DOCTOR [narrating]: It wasn't exactly the reaction I'd expected. He just wandered off into an antechamber and had a man servant bring us wine and fruit and cheese for an early lunch. It was quite a good spread.

WIBBSEY: You can see that this tribe is much better off than the other one. No wonder they're so jealous.
DOCTOR: The catering is definitely better. We have to impress upon him the danger, Mrs Wibbsey. He's doddering about like he just doesn't care. They're vulnerable. If Claudius gets killed here today, we don't stand a chance of getting history back on track.
WIBBSEY: He seems to think he's invulnerable. You know, he reminds me of someone. I can't put my finger on it.

DOCTOR [narrating]: The attack was beginning. There came distant cries and screams. The warriors of the other tribe were laying siege to the settlement on the hill. The noise grew in pitch and ferocity. They were assuming we had fulfilled our side of the bargain, and that the

wizard was dead. I went outside to watch. The elephant stirred and whimpered. She was no kind of monster. She'd be no use in battle, that was obvious. Her fighting days were through. Presently Claudius joined me.

WIZARD: They're coming! You're right. Come back inside. We'll be safe there.
DOCTOR: We're not just going to sit it out, man.

DOCTOR [narrating]: Mrs Wibbsey had been wandering around inside, and just then came hurrying out clutching something.

DOCTOR: What on Earth have you got there?
WIBBSEY: I was poking around, as you do, and I found this.
WIZARD: Please, come inside. We haven't a moment to spare!
WIBBSEY: Another bit of your whatsit, that thingy, you know.
DOCTOR: It's a piece of my spatial geometer. A little tiny bit, but how did it come to be here?
WIBBSEY: Oi! Come back here!

DOCTOR [narrating]: Our host had suddenly darted back into his abode. In amongst all the hullabaloo of the approaching army and the screams of the villagers, the Emperor had seen fit to sneak away. My first priority was to avert further death and disaster. I dispatched Mrs Wibbsey to talk to Claudius and pocketed the precious fragment of the Tardis component. Then I strode out bravely into the encampment towards the very source of all that murderous noise.

DOCTOR: Stop! You must stop at once!
MAN: Stay back, Druid.
DOCTOR: What are you doing? These are defenceless people, your own people. How are they any different to you? They live on a hill, you live on the plain. Aren't you just the same? Why can't you share the things you have? What's wrong with you people?
MAN: They sought help from the magician you've slain.
DOCTOR: Er, well, actually
WOMAN: The magician and his monster still live! Kill the Druid. Kill him along with the rest.
DOCTOR: Wait! I have something to show you in this magic box.
MAN: You have already shown that your powers are false.
DOCTOR: Listen! This box contains the voice of one of the gods. He would be most displeased to witness any more killing today. If you cease your bloody activities right now, he will promise to visit you in person for your midwinter festival. He will bring his Hound of Hell with him to contend with any warrior with bloodlust in his heart. Listen to this. Just give the volume a nudge.
YATES [OC]: Just a quick message to say I'm at a loose end this Christmas and so I thought I'd drop in and see you. As a matter of fact, I rather hoped you'd be expecting me. Oh, and I'll be bringing Captain with me too. (barking) Captain, down, Captain.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I must say my little wheeze worked a second time quite brilliantly, and all down to Mike Yates. Who would have thought it'd be so effective. The warriors decided almost immediately to behave themselves. They suddenly saw the sense in what I was saying. They were ashamed of themselves, dashing about slaughtering women and children and old folk, It was time for the midwinter festival, and they had much jollier things to prepare than massacre.

DOCTOR: Goodbye! Happy solstitial rites! Now, let's see how Mrs Wibbsey's getting on with that absent Emperor. Wibbsentia, are you there?
WIBBSEY: Shh. Come here. His nibs has nipped into that little antechamber next door. Think he must have been caught short.
DOCTOR: Ahem. Claudius? Er, your Royal Highness, or whatever it is you like to be called.
WIBBSEY: He won't come out. I've tried. Perhaps we scared him with our knowledge of the future.
DOCTOR: I'd like to know how he got his hands on that bit of my spatial geometer.
WIZARD [OC]: Why don't you step through here? I've been dying to show you this room.

DOCTOR [narrating]: We followed the sound of his voice behind a velvet curtain, from beyond

which emanated a murky green light.

WIZARD: I'm sorry, Doctor, Mrs Wibbsey. I've put you to a great deal of trouble, and it isn't over yet.

DOCTOR [narrating]: The room beyond was decorated in the fashion of the royal palaces of the Forum in Rome, with a marble floor and even more elaborate mosaics than that which Metafix was creating.

WIZARD: My home from home.

DOCTOR [narrating]: The curious background noise grew louder. We found we were having to raise our voices.

WIBBSEY: It's not another blooming Tardis, is it?
WIZARD: If only, Mrs Wibbsey, if only.
DOCTOR: Mrs Wibbsey, get out of here.
WIBBSEY: I'm not going without you.
DOCTOR: I know. I'm coming as well.
WIZARD: Wait! Come back, Doctor. You're supposed to come with me.
DOCTOR: He's trying to kidnap us. Now move!

DOCTOR [narrating]: We dived back through the velvet curtain, and suddenly (dematerialisation noise)

WIBBSEY: He's gone. That whole funny room is gone.
DOCTOR: Mmm, yes. Who knows where to?
WIBBSEY: Was he really Claudius?
DOCTOR: I don't know, yet, but this business isn't finished by a long chalk.
WIBBSEY: That sounds ominous.
DOCTOR: Oh, it's very ominous indeed, Mrs Wibbsey. What was a piece of my Tardis doing in Roman Britain, eh? Why did Claudius first pretend not to know about the future and then try to kidnap us in a dematerialisation chamber?
WIBBSEY: And if he's scarpered to fairy land what's going to happen to history now?
DOCTOR: Ah, look, here's our mosaic artist. Metafix, old chap, you might want to have a little think before finishing that thing. Your subject has just scarpered without paying.
WIBBSEY: Hmm, I wonder who he'll replace him with.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I gave Metafix the single blue tile that had been affixed to the page from the history book.

WIBBSEY: The very blue of your eyes.
DOCTOR: Oh, I never really looked, Mrs Wibbsey. I just thought Metafix might like to pay tribute to our work here today.
WIBBSEY: History in the making, eh?

DOCTOR [narrating]: But even before we could get outside, we noticed the mosaic artist angrily dismantling his work. He obviously didn't lay tiles for the love of it. It seemed I wouldn't be remembered in baked clay after all. The page from the history book with its flattering photograph had been a fake, yet someone had sent it to me along with an actual tile from this very moment in time. That mystery remained, along with certain others. Outside, we basked for a moment in the newly declared peace between two British tribes. They were mingling and pledging allegiances to each other, and I felt rather proud of a job well done.

WIBBSEY: Oh, we've got a long walk back to the Tardis, haven't we. (elephant trumpet) What the?

DOCTOR [narrating]: We hurried round to the paddock, and found Claudius's elephant being menaced by a selection of hungry warriors from both tribes. The poor dear was shivering, her eyes filled with alarm.

DOCTOR: What is it with the British? First sign of decent weather and they want to have a barbecue.
WIBBSEY: Oh, we have to save her. We can't leave her with this lot.

DOCTOR [narrating]: I would like to be able to say that Mrs Wibbsey and I leapt bravely to Nellie's defence by jumping straight upon her back and galloping down the hill and out of that place, that we made the tribesmen scatter, and that we burst down the barriers and off we went, thundering into the distance across the frozen wastes of ancient Britain. But in reality, we had a bit of a quarrel with the warriors, after which I offered around some placatory aniseed balls, and I eventually convinced them that eating a whole elephant would give them chronic indigestion. After that, Mrs Wibbsey and I led poor Nellie out of that camp at something rather less than a gallop. More of a stately amble, really. She was getting on a bit, the dear.

WIBBSEY: Where are we going to set her free?
DOCTOR: If the Tardis was working properly, we could take her somewhere warm. As it is, she'll simply have to put up with the chilly weather in a friendlier age.
WIBBSEY: Are you taking us back into the future?
DOCTOR: I hope so. (unintelligible) a small one. Perhaps she'll join us on our travels, Mrs Wibbsey. What do you think? She'd be hopeless getting into ventilation shafts, of course.
WIBBSEY: You're talking nonsense again, Doctor.
DOCTOR: I know. Marvellous, isn't it.
(Mrs Wibbsey sighs.)

DOCTOR [narrating]: And on we walked for miles and miles with Nellie at our side. We considered those other papers and artefacts that Mrs Wibbsey had been given at the jumble sale.

WIBBSEY: It's a trail of clues, isn't it, deliberately placed.
DOCTOR: It's looking likely, but to what end? What was the poster *of*, Mrs Wibbsey? Do you remember?
WIBBSEY: It was that Frenchie thing, whatsit, that famous cabaret poster.
DOCTOR: Ah yes, Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret in Montmartre, Mrs Wibbsey. Paris 1894, that's our next stop.
WIBBSEY: What, with Nellie here?
DOCTOR: We'll find a zoo en route in the nineteenth century. We'll pop forward and drop Nellie off, then board the boat train across the Channel. What do you say, Wibbs?
WIBBSEY: My head's in a whirl.
DOCTOR: We could be in Montmartre for supper, Mrs Wibbsey. How'd you feel about another night off from your chores?
WIBBSEY: I could do with a month off.
DOCTOR: No time for that, we're only just starting. Come along, I know this wonderful place, the Moulin Rouge. Ever heard of it?
WIBBSEY: Don't you ever stop?
DOCTOR: Hardly ever. Come along!